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A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED

BEFORE THE MEMBERS OF THE

Boston Female Asylum,

FRIDAY, SEPT. 25, 1801,

BEING THEIR *FIRST* ANNIVERSARY.

BY Samuel Stillman, D. D.
Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Boston.

Preached and published at the Request of the Society.



BOSTON,
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A DISCOURSE, &c.

HOSEA, xiv, 3.

For in Thee, the Fatherless findeth Mercy.

THE increase of charitable Institutions among us, is an undoubted evidence of the improved state of society, and a delightful exemplification of the benevolent affections, which the ever blessed God hath implanted in our nature for very important purposes. They unite the great family of man, by interesting them in the joys and sorrows of each other. They unite men with angels; verily, they unite men with God, who is their glorious source and centre—from him derived, and to him return. *God is Love*, says JOHN, *and he who dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

THUS the Apostle comprises all the glories of the divine character in *Love*, and represents it as the bond of union.

THE love of God may be taken either, for his *universal benevolence*, which inclines him to do good to all—to send his rain on the just and unjust, and to supply the wants of every living thing; or for that *special affection* which he exercises towards mankind; the most sublime and affecting expression of which we have in the method of our salvation by Jesus Christ, which angels desire to look into. In this wonderful transaction, Jehovah does not appear clothed with the

thunders of Mount Sinai, but as the Lord God, gracious and merciful, flow to anger, and plenteous in pardon. He opens wide his heart to man, and therein displays that love which many waters could not quench. He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all : how shall he not with him also freely give us all things. Having given us the greater, he will not deny us the less blessing.

YE Angels, who surround the throne above, with Cherubim and Seraphim, adore the God of Love. Ye men on earth, who are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, in humble triumph sing, *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.*

LET us, my friends, not only admire, but as far as possible imitate, Divine Benevolence. For tho' limited in our power of doing good, much, very much may be done to lessen the calamities of life, and to increase the quantity of human happiness, by a judicious union of individuals in a common cause. This observation is exemplified in the several charitable societies in this town.

THE BOSTON MARINE SOCIETY, instituted in 1742, embraces as its objects, the promotion of the knowledge of maritime affairs, and the relief of distressed mariners, their widows and children. Their funds are great, and their charities frequent and liberal.

THE EPISCOPAL and CONGREGATIONAL CHARITABLE SOCIETIES are excellent, comprehending

certain classes of poor in their respective denominations.

THIS is the case also with the numerous MASONIC Societies, which are founded on Charity, and afford great and repeated relief to distressed brethren, their widows and children. As for their secrets, we may be confident they are of no consequence to the cause of benevolence; because it is incompatible with that charity, on which all lodges are founded, to keep that a secret, that would, if revealed, feed the hungry or clothe the naked, or tend in the smallest degree to lessen the distresses of mankind. A good Mason cannot be so uncharitable, as to secret that, which would prove a blessing to the world, if revealed.

THE BOSTON HUMANE SOCIETY, claims a distinguished place in the list of benevolent institutions. Its principal design is, To recover persons from apparent death by suffocation and drowning.

THE Humane Society that was established in Great Britain in 1774, has succeeded in the most pleasing and surprising manner. From the time of its institution, to the year 1799, we are assured, by undoubted authority, that TWO THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED and NINETEEN persons were restored to life, who, in all probability, would have been consigned to an untimely grave. Pause a moment my friends, and admire an institution that hath, thro' the blessing of God, "restored this great number of mankind to life—

to their parents—to their families—and to their country.” What an affecting circumstance is this to every feeling and benevolent heart ; and what an all persuasive reason to us all, to join and encourage an institution so important to the world !

THE HUMANE SOCIETY of this Commonwealth is founded on the same principles, and with the same design ; and tho’ it is but sixteen years since it was established, the members of it have the unspeakable satisfaction of knowing, that ONE HUNDRED and FIFTY-NINE persons, have been restored to life, who were apparently dead ; who, in all probability, would have been forever lost to their friends, and to the world, had it not been for their benevolent exertions.

THEY have also extended their humane attention to mariners, who are in danger of shipwreck on our coast, by erecting a number of huts in suitable places, furnished with such things as may be necessary for their accommodation till the storm shall cease. In these many distressed mariners have already found refuge, who rise up and call this Society blessed.

THE MASSACHUSETTS CHARITABLE FIRE SOCIETY, also claims our notice, as another benevolent Institution. “ Its object shall ever be to relieve such of the inhabitants of the Commonwealth of *Massachusetts*, as may unfortunately suffer by fire, provided this society shall think them deserving of their charity ; and to reward the industry

and ingenuity of those who may invent useful machines for extinguishing fire, or make extraordinary personal exertions in the time of such calamity, or make such discoveries for preventing its devastation, as shall be thought worthy of their patronage." The state of their funds is respectable ; but as this society embraces the whole Commonwealth, they may expect large demands on their charity ; the increase of their funds, therefore, is a very desirable object.

ON an occasion entirely devoted to the cause of benevolence, you will permit me to remind you of the BOSTON DISPENSARY, which was instituted in 1796, and owes its origin to the late amiable and benevolent Dr. *Oliver Smith* ; who lived just long enough to see it established, then passed to receive the reward of a good and faithful servant. Verily, the memory of the just is blessed.

THE design of this institution is to provide medical assistance for the poor at their own houses. "Those who have seen better days, may be comforted, without being humiliated : and all the poor receive the benefits of a charity, the more refined, as it is the more secret."

SINCE the commencement of this institution, about FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY persons have received the benefits of it. He who pays fifty dollars upon his becoming a member, has a right to keep four patients in the Dispensary at a time, as long as he lives, without any addi-

tional expence. He who pays five dollars a year, has a right to keep in two at a time through the year.

I MENTION these several charitable societies, for the purpose of more general information; confident that they need only to be known to be encouraged.

I AM forbid to pass to the immediate design of our present meeting, before I call your attention to the BOSTON ALMS-HOUSE, which we justly consider as another excellent provision for the poor; and which reflects great honor on the benevolence and liberality of the metropolis. We admire its airy situation, on the banks of a fine river, its capacious apartments, and the ample provision daily made for the poor.

IN all these benevolent institutions, we see what great good may be done to mankind at a *small expence to individuals*, by union in a common cause. They have one general design, even to relieve the distressed, while they differ as to the particular objects of their beneficence.

TO this list of charitable institutions, I add, with the most heart-felt satisfaction, THE BOSTON FEMALE ASYLUM—the Managers of which have this day invited us to the House of the Lord, to ask his blessing on this excellent charity.

As this Institution is new, and not generally understood, I beg leave to lay before this respect-

able Assembly a sketch of its origin, progress and design.

IT originated in the benevolence of a few ladies, who were deeply affected with the distresses to which the children of the poor, especially *females*, are exposed on the death of their parents. Sometimes they fall into the hands of strangers, who treat them with severity. At other times, they are received by some poor relations, who are scarce able to provide for themselves, and yet are unwilling to dispose of them in good families, where they would be taken proper care of.

MANY of you who are house-keepers, have frequently been visited by these miserable little creatures to ask your charity, half starved, half clothed, and shivering with the cold, at a season of the year when they ought by no means to have been abroad; and when your own children were happy in the nursery, or delighting you with their playful tricks, surrounded with all the comforts of life. Often have your feelings been wounded by the distresses of these destitute children, and as often have you loaded them with your bounty. These are among the objects which this Society embraces. "The design of which is to raise funds for the benefit of *Female Orphan Children*,* from three years old to ten." B

* This Asylum is not a *Foundling Hospital*:—Which is mentioned in order to remove from the public mind, all uncertainty concerning the objects of its charity.

THEY are to be placed under the care of a discreet, capable and virtuous Governess—are to be taught to read, write, and cypher, as far as is necessary ; to sew, and do all kinds of domestic business, according to their age.—They are to be provided with every thing needful, at the expense of the Asylum.—The Governess is to impress on their minds from day to day the great principles of religion and morality, and to lead them to public worship every Lord's Day, health and weather permitting.

AT the age of ten years, the Managers, for the time being, are to place them in good and virtuous families, till they shall be eighteen. During this period they are frequently to inquire into the behavior of the children, and the treatment they receive from the families in which they are.

A committee of two members visit the Asylum monthly, to inspect the education of the Orphans, their health and management, and to encourage the best child by some suitable reward. This committee report the state of the Children at the monthly meeting.

THE expences of the Asylum are to be defrayed by the Subscription-money, and the interest of the funds, if necessary. All Donations are to be placed at interest in some productive stock, as an increasing fund.

EACH person, on becoming a member, pays only three dollars a year for the support of the Orphans.

Their election of officers is annual.

This is the general arrangement.

THIS institution met with many discouragements at first, on account of its novelty. There were some who thought it could not be carried into execution. Others, that the Alms-House would embrace this class of poor. This last objection was soon removed, by the consideration, That in an Alms-House all characters are blended, the blind, the lame, the halt, the sick, the healthy, the good and the bad. But such is the delicacy and importance of the female character—such its influence on society, that it ought to be removed, especially in early life, as far as possible from the very appearance of evil. Such is this excellent Society, that it selects the objects of its charity, and is wholly under the direction and the management of females. It is therefore the proper place for *female orphans*. This observation is addressed to our feelings—Is there a father—is there a mother in this assembly, who, if dying without property, and leaving behind him one such child, would not, in his last minutes, bless God for this Institution? * For here the fatherless

*The first child was admitted into this Asylum with circumstances extremely affecting. Having lost her parents when about five years of age, she was received by an aunt, affectionate, but poor, who adopted her as her own. Soon after, disease attacked her, and she expected to die. Her principal anxiety now was, what would become of this destitute child. In the moment of her distress she was visited by a friend who told her, that a place was just established under the management of the Ladies of Boston, for *female orphan children*; and that they would certainly receive the child on application being made to them. Overjoyed at this unexpected information, she immediately exclaimed, "Thank God, that place is provided for my little girl."

findeth mercy. Here the benevolent Fair, wipe the tear from the Orphan's eye.

PERMIT me to suggest, on this occasion, That the children of those who now possess wealth or competency, may, through a change of condition at some future time, need this charity.

THE ladies who patronize this institution, especially the managers, act the part, and enter into the feelings of mothers, towards these Orphan†. Happy children, to have fallen into the hands of those who possess the tenderest sensibilities, hearts full of benevolence, and an accurate knowledge of the best method of training females to virtue and usefulness. This, it will be at once confessed, is the proper business of women. And we are happy to find that several other charitable societies, under their direction, have been lately established in our country; one at Newyork, for widows and children; another at Providence, and a third at Salem, upon the plan of this society. May success attend them, and the blessing of many, ready to perish, come upon them. —

THE *Boston Female Asylum* does honor not only to the benevolence, but to the judgment and perseverance of the ladies of Boston and its vicinity.

† The children were present, neatly dressed in blue, and placed in an elevated situation, that the friends of the Institution might see the *first fruits* of their bounty; and the whole assembly behold the very interesting objects of their present charity. The sight of these orphans was very affecting, and drew tears from many eyes not used to weep.

It is but one year since it was organized, yet it can boast 300 subscribers ; among whom are some of the first characters for respectability, property and influence. Their annual income is about 900 dollars—their money at interest about 900 more.

THE number of Orphans already admitted are *thirteen*, one being necessarily absent. These are as many as they can support at present. Frequent applications are made to the Managers for the admission of others, who are the proper objects of this charity.; whom they cannot receive till there is an increase of their finances. The Managers have thought, that an annual discourse, and contribution for the benefit of the Asylum, agreeably to the practice of other Charitable Societies, would be both proper and useful. They this day make their first attempt ; not doubting that the gentlemen, who have often invited them to attend *their* public charities, will generously assist them to extend relief to many other hapless Orphans.

I HAVE not time to mention the many advantages that will result from this Institution. Suffice it to say, That besides the luxury of doing good, and of rescuing so many destitute children from poverty, vice and ruin ; house keepers may, in future, resort to this Asylum for girls to live in their families, who have been early taught the habits of virtue and industry.

to the ladies who founded, and who are engaged to support this excellent Society, I beg leave to say, That through the smiles of Providence on your benevolent exertions, you have succeeded beyond your most sanguine expectations ; and in one year have laid the foundation of an Institution, that will rise, I doubt not, into great importance, and render your names dear to generations yet unborn.

THE thanks of a benevolent public await you. And could the parents of these Orphans, now in the grave, be permitted this day to make us a short visit, they would rapturously join in the general tribute of thanks, on seeing their children thus amply provided for by your hospitality and care. Go on and prosper.

you may depend on the approbation and patronage of the wise and good, who repeatedly ask, What can be the reason, that such an Institution was not thought of before ? But it was reserved for you, to give being to a Society, so perfectly congenial with the female character.

MAY that God who is the Father of the fatherless, reward you a thousand fold for your hospitality and kindness to these poor orphan children, and finally receive you into his eternal kingdom.

MAY I now be permitted to call the immediate attention of this benevolent assembly, to these

children ; the first fruits of this excellent charity. They address you in silent, but persuasive eloquence. The little suppliants ask your assistance ; which I am confident, you will cheerfully afford them. Their countenances indicate ease, health and contentment ; and the decency of their conduct reflects great honor on their Governesses. Nothing is wanting to increase their number, and to extend this charity, but an increase of the funds. This may be accomplished by increasing the number of subscribers—by donations from gentlemen and ladies during their life time, or by legacies at their death, and by an annual contribution.

MAY every heart this day be open, may every hand be liberal—*For he who hath pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given he will pay him again.*



ORDER OF PERFORMANCE

ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE **Boston Female Asylum.**

SEPTEMBER 25, 1801.

I.

ODE introductory to a SACRED CONCERT.

II.

PRAYER, by the Rev. Dr. ECKLEY.

III.

An OCCASIONAL ODE, *written by the Rev. T. M. HARRIS.*

NO longer, poor Orphans, indulge your despair,
The Father of Mercies has answer'd your prayer,
And means of assistance supplied.
Behold those kind Friends, whom his bounty inspires
To accomplish your hopes and fulfil your desires,
And for all that your hapless condition requires
Of relief and of help to provide.
To the house they have furnish'd they bid you repair,
To partake of their bountiful kindness and care,
And instruction and comfort receive.
O accept of their favors, their patronage prize,
Be all that they wish, and do all they advise,
For their aim is to make you both virtuous and wise,
And happy so long as you live !

IV.

BENEFICENCE.—A HYMN.

<p>FATHER of our feeble race, Wife, benignant and kind, Spread o'er nature's ample face, How's thy goodness unconfind. Musing in the silent grove, Or the busy walks of men, Still we trace thy wondrous love, Claiming large returns again. Lord what offering shall we bring, At thine altars when we bow ? Hearts, the pure, unfeigned spring, Whence thy kind affections flow :</p>	<p>Soft Compassion's feeling soul, By the melting eye express'd : Sympathy, at whose control Sorrow leaves the wounded breast Willing hands to lead the blind, Bind the wound, or feed the poor : Love embracing all mankind, Charity, with lib'ral store. Teach us, O thou heav'nly King, Thus to show our grateful mind, Thus th' accepted off'ring bring. Love to thee, and all mankind.</p>
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V.

SERMON, *by the Rev. Dr. STILLMAN.*

VI

ANNIVERSARY HYMN, *written by the Rev. Mr. HARRIS.*

WITH cheerful notes begin the strain,
 To Charity so justly due ;
 And gratulate this Orphan train
 On the best hopes they ever knew.
 No more complaining fills the street
 Of children who deserted roam,
 For here the houseless vagrants meet
 A benefactor and a home.
 And girls, defenceless, wretched, poor,
 Snatch'd from the haunts of vice and care,
 From ill examples here secure
 Instruction and protection share.
 Train'd soon in Wisdom's pleasant ways,
 And taught to be discreet and good,
 Virtue will be through all their days
 From habit and from choice pursu'd.
 Then, as they praise each Patroness
 Who bounty and assistance lends,
 Join them in prayers that God would bless
 The Institution and its Friends.

VII.

PRAYER, *by the Rev. Dr. MORSE.*

VIII.

INVOCATION TO CHARITY.

COME, Charity, with goodness crown'd,
 Encircled in thy heavenly robe ;
 Diffuse thy blessings all around
 To every corner of the globe.
 See where she comes with power to bless,
 With open hands and tender heart ;
 Which wounded is at man's distress,
 And bleeds at every human smart.

 IX.
 COLLECTION.

X.

An OCCASIONAL ODE, written by C. P. SUMNER, Esq.

YE generous Fair, whose bosoms move
 And melt with Charity and Love,
 Humbly daring, persevere
 To dry the Female Orphan's tear.

Deign helpless Innocence to seek,
 To bloom the rose-buds of her cheek
 With kindness check each rising sigh,
 And kindle Virtue in her eye.

Thus shall ye live by all beloved,
 By your own goodness self approved;
 And Fashion urge the liberal strife,
 To add new charms to social life.

The little Orphan Girls no more
 Their hapless fate of life deplore,
 Abandon'd to the coarse world's scorn,
 Uncherished, houseless and forlorn.

Nature herself with Reason's laws
 Shall advocate her sacred cause;
 From Custom's icy bondage start,
 And warm the Chancery of the Heart.

Nor will Compassion's lovely train
 Attend the suppliant voice in vain;
 For those whom taste & affluence bless
 Will pity undeserved distress.



